

Message Text

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FOR HOLBROOKE EYES ONLY FROM OAKLEY AND QUINN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, VN, US

SUBJECT: DRAFT MEMORANDUM: U.S.-SRV NEGOTIATIONS IN
PARIS

FOLLOWING IS A DRAFT MEMO FOR THE SECRETARY:

ISSUE FOR DECISION

WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY RECOMMENDED AN INITIAL NEGOTIATING

STRATEGY OF A LIMITED APPROACH SEEKING EARLY ESTABLISHMENT

OF RELATIONS WITH THE VIETNAMESE, INVOLVING INFREQUENT

RATHER THAN INTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS IN PARIS. WE HAVE ALSO

SUGGESTED THAT MY DEPUTY BOB OAKLEY SHOULD REPRESENT US

INITIALLY.

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SRV FOREIGN MINISTER TRINH HAS REPLIED TO YOUR LETTER

AGREEING TO TALKS, PROPOSING THAT THEY BEGIN IN LATE APRIL

OR (PREFERABLY) EARLY MAY AT THE LEVEL OF AN "AMBASSADOR

SPECIALLY APPOINTED FOR THAT MISSION OR AT A HIGHER LEVEL."

WE SHOULD NOW COMMUNICATE TO THE VIETNAMESE OUR IDEAS

ABOUT THE FIRST MEETING AND BEGIN TO FOCUS ON OUR NEGOTIATING OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGY.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

A. MODALITIES OF TALKS

THE VIETNAMESE ARE AWAITING OUR PROPOSALS AS TO DATE, LEVEL, AND PACE OF THE TALKS. WE SUGGEST MAY 3 AS THE DATE. THIS MEETS THE VIETNAMESE PREFERENCE THAT TALKS FOLLOW PHAM VAN DONG'S VISIT TO PARIS BUT IS STILL SOON ENOUGH TO MAINTAIN MOMENTUM OF THE WOODCOCK COMMISSION VISIT. IT WILL ALSO GIVE TIME FOR THE NEW MIA TECHNICAL-LEVEL PROCEDURES TO BE TESTED A BIT.

REGARDING THE PACE OF TALKS, WE SEE NO NEED TO ESTABLISH A SCHEDULE OF REGULAR MEETINGS. THE VIETNAMESE MAY PREFER SECRET

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THE LATTER, BUT OUR STRATEGY DICTATES A LESS FIXED ARRANGEMENT WITH THE EMPHASIS UPON RAPID ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. WE SHOULD SUGGEST ONLY AN INITIAL MEETING, WITH SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS TO BE DECIDED AS NECESSARY BY THE RESULTS OF THE PREVIOUS ONE. THIS WAY WE AVOID GETTING LOCKED INTO AN ARRANGEMENT WHICH FORCES US INTO PROLONGED TALKS AND STERILE REPETITION, A SITUATION WHERE WE WILL BE UNDER PRESSURE TO COME UP CONTINUALLY WITH SOMETHING "NEW" OR RISK A "BREAK" IN TALKS WITH OBVIOUS NEGATIVE REPERCUSSIONS.

AS I INDICATED EARLIER TO YOU, WE FEEL BOB OAKLEY IS THE RIGHT MAN AT THE RIGHT LEVEL FOR THE JOB. SINCE THE VIETNAMESE DO NOT HAVE A COMPARABLE LEVEL IN THE HANOI

HIERARCHY AND ARE PRESSING FOR HIGH-LEVEL REPRESENTATION,
YOU MAY WISH TO CONSIDER GIVING HIM THE PERSONAL RANK OF
EITHER MINISTER OR AMBASSADOR FOR THIS PARTICULAR ASSIGN-
MENT. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU COULD RECONSIDER THE ADVISABILITY
OF HAVING A SPECIAL NEGOTIATOR SUCH AS AMBASSADOR MARSHALL
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GREEN; OR YOU COULD DESIGNATE ME TO REPRESENT THE U.S.
FOR AT LEAST THE FIRST MEETING.

ATTACHMENT 1 IS A TELEGRAM FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION WHICH
WOULD INFORM FOREIGN MINISTER TRINH OF OUR PROPOSALS AS
DESCRIBED ABOVE.

B. OBJECTIVES AND NEGOTIATING STRATEGY

OUR OBJECTIVES SHOULD BE TO SEEK THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
NORMAL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE SRV AT AN EARLY DATE,
TOGETHER WITH CONTINUING MOVEMENT ON THE MIA ISSUE. SUCH
RELATIONS WOULD INCLUDE AN EXCHANGE OF EMBASSIES AND
NORMAL TRAVEL AND EXCHANGE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

AGREEMENT COULD INITIALLY INVOLVE EITHER A JOINT ANNOUNCE-
MENT TO THIS EFFECT WITH DETAILS TO BE WORKED OUT LATER,
OR, IF HANOI APPEARS WILLING, AGREEMENT COULD INCLUDE
SPECIFIC PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR EXCHANGE OF EMBASSIES.

ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS SHOULD NOT CARRY WITH IT A U.S.
OBLIGATION OR PROMISE OF ECONOMIC AID. IN FACT, IT SHOULD
BE OUR NEGOTIATING OBJECTIVE TO SEPARATE THE AID QUESTION

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FROM THAT OF NORMAL RELATIONS AND TO PLACE IT IN THE

CATEGORY OF A LONG-TERM ISSUE TO BE DISCUSSED AFTER RELATIONS ARE ESTABLISHED. NORMALIZED TRADE RELATIONS SHOULD NOT INITIALLY BE CONSIDERED AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF DIPLOMATIC NORMALIZATION, ALTHOUGH IT COULD BE CONSIDERED IF WE JUDGE THAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES WARRANT.

WE HAVE SEVERAL CHOICES OF AN INITIAL NEGOTIATING PRESENTATION:
-- WE COULD BEGIN THE TALKS WITH AN OFFER TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITHOUT ACTION ON ANY OF THE OTHER BILATERAL ISSUES OF CONCERN TO THE SRV -- TRADE, UN MEMBER-SHIP, AND AID --, STATING THAT THESE ISSUES SHOULD BE RESOLVED IN THE CONTEXT OF REGULAR DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS.

THIS WOULD BE REGARDED BY THE VIETNAMESE AS EXTREMELY NEGATIVE AND WOULD PROBABLY PRODUCE AN IMMEDIATE IMPASSE.
-- WE COULD COMBINE THE OFFER TO ESTABLISH RELATIONS WITH THE REMOVAL OF OUR OBJECTION TO SRV MEMBERSHIP IN THE UN. THIS IS OUR PREFERRED COURSE, ESPECIALLY SINCE

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AGREEING TO UN MEMBERSHIP IS SOMETHING WE HAVE OTHER VALID REASONS FOR DOING. WE COULD POINT TO OUR ACTION AS A CONCRETE GESTURE OF GOODWILL AND OUR DESIRE TO PROCEED TOWARD NORMALIZATION. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT HANOI WOULD AGREE TO THIS INITIALLY. NEVERTHELESS, THEY WOULD HAVE A HARDER TIME REFUSING THIS OPENING OFFER. THEY MIGHT ACCEPT AFTER TIME FOR RECONSIDERATION, AND THE ONUS FOR ANY IMPASSE WOULD BE MORE ON THEM THAN US.

-- WE COULD RELAX OR LIFT THE TRADE EMBARGO AS A FURTHER

GESTURE TO INDUCE VIETNAMESE ACCEPTANCE OF PROMPT

ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS. THIS WOULD BE MORE IN KEEPING

WITH A "NORMAL" DIPLOMATIC RELATIONSHIP, BUT IT WOULD

SPEND A MAJOR BARGAINING CARD AT THE BEGINNING AND LEAVES

ONLY THE AID ISSUE TO BE DISCUSSED AND NEGOTIATED IF WE

WANT TO AVOID AN IMPASSE. I DO NOT FAVOR MAKING THIS

PART OF OUR INITIAL APPROACH. AMONG OTHER THINGS, VIET-

NAMENE ACTIONS IN NEGOTIATIONS AND ON THE MIA ISSUE, AS

WELL AS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VIETNAM AND THE ASEAN
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COUNTRIES, SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT BEFORE DECIDING

WHETHER TO "SWEETEN THE POT" IN THIS FASHION.

IF THE VIETNAMESE REJECT OUR PROPOSAL FOR ESTABLISHING

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AFTER ONE OR MORE ADDITIONAL MEETINGS,

WE MIGHT WISH TO LEAVE FURTHER MEETINGS IN ABEYANCE WHILE

BOTH SIDES RECONSIDER. WE WOULD BE IN A POSITIVE PUBLIC

POSITION OF HAVING OFFERED DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND WITH-

DRAWN OUR OBJECTION TO UN MEMBERSHIP, AND COULD AFFORD TO

WAIT HANOI OUT A BIT TO SEE IF THEY RECONSIDER. ALTERNA-

TIVELY, WE COULD SUGGEST THAT TALKS ON TRADE AND OTHER

MATTERS (WITHOUT SPECIFICALLY MENTIONING AID) BE HELD IN

NEW YORK WITH THE SRV MISSION TO THE UN. IF THIS WERE

ACCEPTED, IT WOULD BE A SLIGHT FURTHER MOVE TOWARD

NORMALIZATION WITHOUT SACRIFICING OUR BASIC POSITION. IF

IT WERE REJECTED, WE WOULD BE NO WORSE OFF.

C. PROSPECTS

AS YOU WELL KNOW, THE VIETNAMESE ARE TOUGH NEGOTIATORS

AND WILL TRY TO EXTRACT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE FROM US IN THE
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NORMALIZATION PROCESS. THEY HAVE DONE THIS WITH OTHERS

RECENTLY (SUCCESSFULLY WITH THE JAPANESE, LESS SUCCESSFULLY

WITH THE BRITISH AND OTHERS). THEY OF COURSE SEE US AS

PARTICULARLY SUSCEPTIBLE TO CONCESSIONS BECAUSE OF THEIR

IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL FIXATION ON OUR "WAR GUILT" AND

BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE WE ARE ANXIOUS TO GET AN MIA ACCOUNT-

ING AND ACHIEVE NORMALIZATION.

THE VIETNAMESE WILL CERTAINLY RAISE THE ISSUES OF BOTH

TRADE AND AID AT THE FIRST MEETING. THEY ARE LIKELY TO

INSIST THAT THE U.S. AT LEAST INDICATE ITS INTENT TO

REMOVE TRADE RESTRICTIONS AND PROVIDE AID AS A PRECONDITION

FOR DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. THEY MAY ALSO INSIST THAT THE

U.S. ACKNOWLEDGE PUBLICLY IN SOME FASHION THE "ERRORS" OF

PAST POLICY AND/OR ACCEPT AN OBLIGATION TO ATONE FOR THE

PAST.

WE SHOULD RESPOND TO THESE PROPOSALS BY REITERATING THE

PRESIDENT'S STATED DESIRE TO LOOK AHEAD AND HIS REJECTION

OF U.S. RESPONSIBILITY FOR REPARATIONS OR A U.S. APOLOGY.

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TRADE AND AID RELATIONSHIPS CAN BE DISCUSSED AFTER

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED AND BOTH THE

U.S. AND THE SRV HAVE COME TO SEE THEIR RELATIONS AS MORE

NORMAL. MOREOVER, THE CONGRESSIONAL RESTRICTION ON AID

AND CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES CANNOT BE IGNORED.

WHILE WE OF COURSE WANT TO CONTINUE MOVEMENT TOWARD

ESTABLISHING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, WE HAVE NO SERIOUS NEED

FOR RAPID NORMALIZATION AND A RATHER RESTRAINED AND

MEASURED PACE WOULD PROBABLY BEST SUIT OUR INTERESTS BOTH

IN THE REGION AND POLITICALLY HERE AT HOME. THE DOMESTIC

PRESSES TO NORMALIZE ARE NOT GREAT - SOME U.S. OIL

COMPANIES AND A FEW BANKS ARE EAGER TO OPEN UP TRADE WITH

VIETNAM, BUT THE AMOUNTS INVOLVED ARE RELATIVELY SMALL;

A FEW CONGRESSMEN SUCH AS BINGHAM MAY PUSH FOR LIFTING

THE TRADE EMBARGO; CERTAIN CHURCH AND OTHER GROUPS WILL

PUSH FOR HUMANITARIAN MOVES ON OUR PART. BUT GENERALLY

THERE IS LITTLE SENTIMENT FOR GIVING ANYTHING SUBSTANTIAL

FOR NORMALIZATION AND VIRTUALLY NONE FOR GIVING AID. IN

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ASIA, ATTITUDES ARE MIXED BUT EVEN THE PRC IS DISPLAYING

SOME NERVOUSNESS OVER THE PROSPECT OF OVERLY-RAPID NORMA-

LIZATION. THIS IS CLEARLY THE ATTITUDE OF THE ASEAN

COUNTRIES.

WE SHOULD BE PREPARED FOR AT LEAST AN INITIAL IMPASSE IN

TALKS AND A RATHER PROLONGED NORMALIZATION PROCESS, ALWAYS

TAKING CARE TO POSITION THE U.S. IN A POSITIVE ATTITUDE.

EVENTUALLY HANOI MAY COME TO SEE ITS INTERESTS IN TRADE

AND OTHER POTENTIAL ECONOMIC BENEFITS OUTWEIGHING ITS

IDEOLOGICAL NEEDS. FOR OUR PART, AT SOME POINT WE MAY

WISH TO ARRANGE SOME HUMANITARIAN AND/OR MULTILATERAL

ASSISTANCE AND RELAX OUR TRADE RESTRICTIONS IN ORDER TO

MOVE THE NORMALIZATION PROCESS ALONG.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT YOU APPROVE THE ATTACHED CABLE INSTRUCTING

EMBASSY PARIS TO ADVISE THE VIETNAMESE OF OUR PROPOSALS ON

DATE, PLACE, AND LEVEL OF THE TALKS.

2. THAT YOU APPROVE THE INITIAL NEGOTIATING STRATEGY

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OF OFFERING ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS AND UN MEMBERSHIP.

APPROVE DISAPPROVE

ATTACHMENT:

CABLE TO PARIS
CHRISTOPHER

SECRET

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